



TOWARDS MEANINGFUL

TEFILLA

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בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם הַזֶּה אֶת הָעוֹלָם כֻּלּוֹ
בְּטוֹבוֹ בְּחֵן בְּחֶסֶד וּבְרַחֲמִים, הוּא נָתַן לָחֵם לְכָל-בֶּשֶׂר כִּי
לְעוֹלָם חֲסִדוֹ וּבְטוֹבוֹ הַגְּדוֹל תַּמִּיד לֹא חָסַר לָנוּ וְאֵל יַחֲסַר לָנוּ
מִזֶּה לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד בְּעִבּוּר שְׁמוֹ הַגְּדוֹל כִּי הוּא קֵל זָן וּמַפְרִינֵם לְכָל
וּמְטִיב לְכָל וּמְכִין מִזֶּה לְכָל-בְּרִיּוֹתָיו אֲשֶׁר בָּרָא בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה'
הַזֶּה אֶת הַכֹּל.

In Israeli gans, the children are taught to sing the following cute little rhyme before they begin to *bench* – *אכלנו ושבענו, האוכל היה* – (We ate and were satiated, the food was tasty, and now we will all say thank you to Hashem). Cute and simple, this is really the crux of the first paragraph of *benching*. In this paragraph, we thank Hashem for the basics, for the food that He has given us in order to sustain us. We thank Him for giving us our basic necessities, the things that we need to survive. As it written in **Gemara Berachot 58a** – אורח – טוב, מה הוא אומר? כמה טרחות טרח בעל הבית?...וכל מה שטרה, לא טרח אלא בשבילי – *“What does a good guest say? Wow! Look how much effort my host put in! And everything he did, he did on my behalf!”*

Rabbi Eliyahu Munk in his book *Olam haTefillot* explains that in this paragraph, we take note of the fact that there is both the *shegacha* – general Hashgacha (Divine intervention) over the entire world, and the *shegacha* – personal Hashgacha over each person. We start by talking about the fact that Hashem is “הזן את העולם כולו”, He feeds the world as a whole. He makes sure that the entire nature system is in place so that there are trees and vegetation, as well as an intricately planned food chain so that every creature has what to feed on. We then go on to talk about the fact that Hashem is “נותן לחם לכל בשר”, He makes sure that each individual person has His own personal needs taken care of.

This is based on a vivid description portrayed in **Gemara Berachot 58a**. There, the Gemara tells us that while the whole world is sleeping in their beds, Hashem is hard at work. He is moving the winds, raising the clouds, bringing down rain, growing crops and drying them off, and “מערך שולחן לפני כל” – *“אחד ואחד”* – setting the table before each and

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every one of us. Hashem manipulates the entire ecosystem to make sure that every single individual has what to eat.

Through Hashem's actions of Hashgacha, we are able to recognize His great love for us, and His constant intervention in our lives, His "חן וחסד ורחמים." Because we have seen in the past that Hashem is always there for us – "תמיד לא חסר לנו", He has never allowed us to go lacking, that we can have the *bitachon* and confidence that "אל יחסר לנו", that in the future He will never let us go lacking. We ask Hashem to continuously take care of us, not for our own selfish needs, but "בעבור שמו הגדול", in order that we can serve Him better and in order to make a Kiddush Hashem, to show that Hashem takes care of His creations.

We conclude the paragraph the same way that we started, recognizing both the קל זן ומפרנס לכל that Hashem is a קל זן ומפרנס לכל, He feeds and sustains the world at large, as well as the השגחה פרטית that Hashem is מזון מכוון, He prepares the exact food that each and every one of His creations need to survive.

May we all take note, both during our *benching* as well as in general, when we look around at the world, at nature, at history, and at our own personal lives, the double bracha of both the השגחה פרטית and כללית that surround us. ■

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